

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

PROPOSED SIGNAGE

HUDDART PARKER BUILDING

2 JERVOIS QUAY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

The Applicant is The New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust (hereafter the "Trust" or "Applicant").

The owner of the Huddart Parker Building at 2 Jervis Quay is Huddart Parker Building Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trust.

The Huddart Parker Building is a listed heritage building ["Huddart Parker Building 1923", Symbol #155, Planning Map 17]. It is located within the Post Office Square Heritage Area.

During 2012-2014 the Trust undertook a comprehensive \$9 million seismic upgrade and refurbishment of the building.

The Trust is now applying for resource consent to enable the reinstatement of the rooftop sign, long a feature of the building but, aside from the supporting structure, removed during the seismic upgrade works.

The purpose of this report is to describe the proposal and provide an Assessment of Effects on the Environment (AEE) report.

1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

After this introduction, the report provides the following information:

- Section 2 describes the site, context, the proposal, and consultation.
- Section 3 identifies the relevant District Plan provisions.
- Section 4 provides a resource management assessment of the proposal.
- Section 5 provides a conclusion.

2 LOCATION AND PROPOSAL

2.1 SITE

The application site is at 2 Jervois Quay.¹

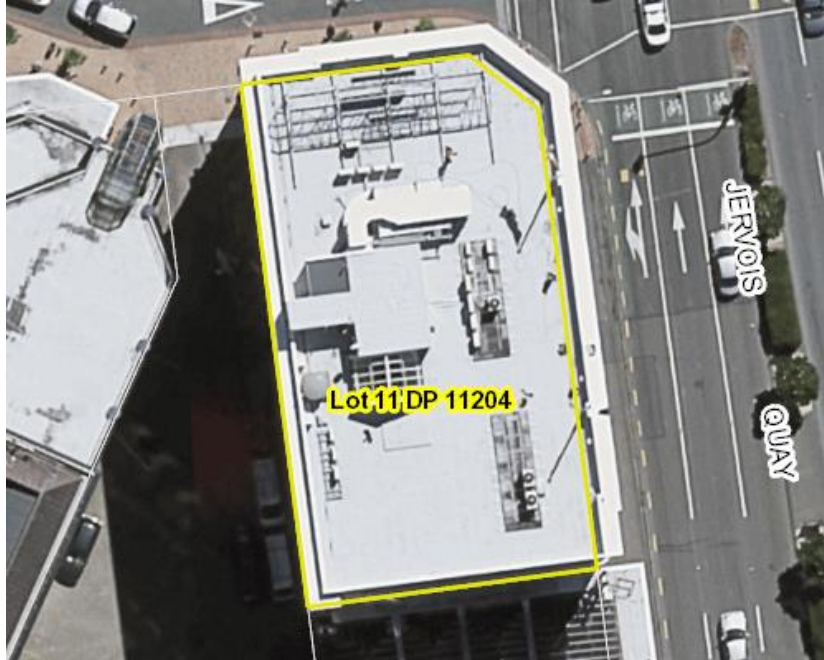


Figure 1: 2 Jervois Quay (courtesy WCC Property Search)

The legal description is Lot 11 DP 11204 as described on Record of Title WN33D/660.



Photo 1: Huddart Parker Building - 2 Jervois Quay

¹ The heritage listing references the building's street address as 2-8 Hunter Street. However, the building does not have street frontage to Hunter Street. The building's street frontages are Jervois Quay and Grey Street.

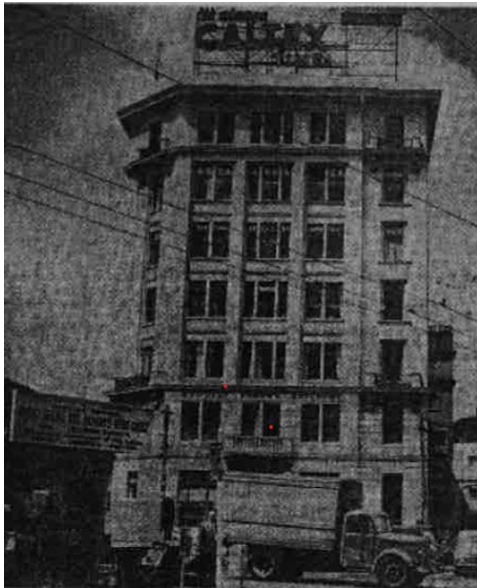
2.2 HISTORIC CONTEXT

Historically a rooftop sign has been a long-standing part of the character of the building, as illustrated on historic photographs² - refer Photos 2 and 3 below - and confirmed by the following statements:³

The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was also once a familiar inner-city landmark

The building is situated on a prominent corner site at a corner of Post Office Square and Jervois Quay and has a strong street presence, particularly when viewed from the north. Its rooftop has long been occupied by signage, historically an illuminated clock and weather forecast, presently by an advertisement for a local radio station and a temperature display. This signage takes advantage of the prominence of the building, particularly for passing traffic along the key transport route of Customhouse and Jervois Quays.

The building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature on the roof. This has somewhat diminished since the removal of the display.



Photos 2 & 3: historic photos of Huddart Parker Building (with rooftop sign)

² Photo 3 was used to illustrate the building in the Wellington City Council Heritage Building Inventory 2001.

³ Reference: Huddart Parker Building, Wellington City Council Heritage Inventory (July 2012).

2.3 THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to reinstate rooftop signage in the form of a digital billboard, which will be secured to the existing historic sign support framework.

The statement on behalf of the Trust in **Appendix 1** provides useful context for the application.

A statement prepared by Dunning Thornton Consultants confirms that the existing framework will require some strengthening or and/or replacement - refer **Appendix 2**.

The sign will be a maximum 13m x 4m. ⁴

A drawing of the existing framework is attached - refer **Appendix 3**.

Photomontage 1 illustrates the proposal.



Photomontage 1: illustration of proposed sign

Further photomontages are provided in **Appendix 4**

The sign display will change on a rotating basis and feature a combination of public information (weather conditions, time and community events) and commercial advertising.

It is anticipated that there will be up to six different displays, with an image display time of 8-seconds (minimum) and a 0.5 second dissolve transition between images.

Illumination levels will be automatically managed so that the screen is responsive to changes in ambient lighting levels.

As confirmed in the Owner's Statement, the Trust anticipates establishing a "deferred maintenance reserve fund" in their financial statements to be funded from sign rental payments, as a means to provide for the general maintenance of the heritage building.

⁴ The Dunning Thornton Drawing "Elevation A Front" shows an 'indicative sign size' of 13m x 4m. A consent condition limiting the sign to this size is recommended,

2.4 CONSULTATION

A pre-application meeting was held with Council resource consent, urban design and heritage officers on 16 June 2019 and feedback provided on 18 July 2019.

Under the heading “Key Notes”, it was recorded that:

The proposal to construct a new electronic billboard (sign) onto the existing frame on top of the Huddart Parker Building intended to display advertising is not supported by Council as:

- *the construction of a new sign would be inconsistent with the District Plan;*
- *would likely result in adverse effects on the heritage and architectural values of the existing building and the heritage values of the Post Office Square Heritage area; and*
- *would likely result in adverse effects on townscape resulting in a built form that is inconsistent with other signage around the city.*

The advice was that:

... public notification is likely as it would likely have adverse effects on the wider environment that is more than minor.

The feedback given has been considered as part of preparing this application.

Although the building is not included on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, initial consultation with Heritage New Zealand confirmed general support for the proposal.⁵

⁵ The initial consultation with Heritage New Zealand was undertaken by Heritage Conservation Architect Ian Bowman.

3 DISTRICT PLAN ASSESSMENT

3.1 ZONING

Map 17 shows that the site is in the Central Area, Post Office Square Heritage Area and the building is a listed heritage building.



Figure 2: Planning Map 17 (part only)

Viewshaft 9 and Viewshaft 15 are respectively adjacent to (#9) and cross (#15) the site.

Post Office Square is a listed public space for sunlight protection.

3.2 COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

The proposal has been assessed for compliance with the District Plan rules and standards and the following conclusions reached:

1. The applicable provisions are the Central Area (Chapters 12 and 13) and Heritage (Chapters 20 and 21) provisions of the District Plan.

3.2.1 Central Area

The Central Area standards for signs are specified in 13.6.4.

Standard 13.6.4.1.2 states that any sign on a building:

- *must not project above the parapet level, or the highest part of the part of the building to which the sign is attached (including above the verandah).*

Standard 13.6.4.1.4 states that for any sign located on a building above 18.6m above ground level, the sign:

- *must bear only the name and/or logo of the building owner or occupier, or the building on which the sign is located.*

Standard 13.6.4.1.7, which relates to the listed heritage areas, including the Post Office Square Heritage Area, requires that the information included on the sign is limited to the building name, name/logo of the business, owner or occupier of the building on which the sign is located, and/or the product or service available on the site.

The proposed sign does not meet all of the standards in 13.6.4.1 and therefore requires resource consent under Central Area Rule 13.3.9 as a Discretionary Activity (Restricted), with the matters for assessment restricted to:

- 13.3.9.1 moving images, text or lights
- 13.3.9.2 position
- 13.3.9.3 dimensions
- 13.3.9.4 number of signs
- 13.3.9.5 sign display (of signs located on buildings above 18.6m above ground level).

3.2.2 Heritage

Resource consent is also required under Heritage Rule 21D.3.1 as a Discretionary Activity (Restricted), as the sign is larger than 0.5m², with the matters for assessment restricted to:

- 21D.3.1.1 sign design, location and placement
- 21D.3.1.2 area, height and number of signs
- 21D.3.1.3 illumination
- 21D.3.1.4 fixing and methods of fixing.

Under Rule 21D.3.1, the criteria to guide the Council's assessment are listed as follows:

- 21D.3.1.5 *the extent to which any sign supporting structure detracts from the heritage significance or values of a heritage building or object.*
- 21D.3.1.6 *whether any sign detracts from the architecture of the building including decorative detailing, structural divisions, windows or doorways.*
- 21D.3.1.7 *whether additional signs will result in clutter.*
- 21D.3.1.8 *the extent to which the quality of the design of the sign and the standard of graphics complement the building or object.*
- 21D.3.1.9 *whether the means of fixing the sign to a listed heritage building or object including associated cabling or wiring for illuminated signs will adversely affect the heritage fabric and heritage values of the listed building or object.*
- 21D.3.1.10 *whether intensity of illumination will adversely affect the heritage values of the building or object.*
- 21D.3.1.11 *the extent to which signs comply with the Design Guide for Signs.*

In explanation it is stated that:

Consent will normally only be granted for signs on or adjacent to a listed item where these can be designed and located to respect the architectural form and detailing of the listed item. Their effects must therefore be assessed in order to achieve a high degree of compatibility with the heritage significance of the heritage item so as to not detract from that significance.

Note: if the Council resource consent reporting officer considers that the proposal requires resource consent under other rules of the District Plan, these are applied for and further information and assessment will be provided upon request.

3.3 SUMMARY

Based on the above, and given that the activity status is Discretionary Activity Restricted, with consent required under s104C of the Act, the effects can usefully be assessed under the following headings:

- heritage effects;
- visual amenity/townscape effects; and
- traffic safety effects.

Non-Notification Clause

It is noted that on a recent application for signs on a listed heritage building (The Embassy Theatre - SR 470800) the Council recorded that under both Central Area Rule 13.3.9 (Signs) and Heritage Rule 21D.3.1 (Signs) that:

- *there are no relevant conditions; and*
- *a non-notification clause applies to this rule* ⁶

⁶ SR No 470800, Notice of Decision, 15 December 2020, at page 9 (Rule 13.3.9) and page 10 (Rule 21D.3.1).

4 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

4.1 SECTION 104C

Section 104C of the Act states that when considering an application for a restricted discretionary activity, a consent authority must consider only those matters over which it has restricted its discretion, may grant or refuse the application, but if it grants the application, may impose conditions only for those matters over which discretion is restricted.

The effects of the restricted matters are assessed below.

4.2 HERITAGE EFFECTS

The heritage effects of the proposed digital billboard have been assessed by heritage expert/conservation architect, Adam Wild of Archifact. His report attached - refer **Appendix 5**.

The report provides an assessment of the proposal against:

- the assessment criteria under Rule 21D.3.1 for signs on heritage buildings - a Discretionary Activity (Restricted); and
- the Central Area Urban Design Guide - Appendix 3.0 "Heritage Area Objectives and Guidelines".

The overall conclusion is that:

The proposed reinstatement of a billboard (in this case a digital billboard) to the existing signage frame atop the roof of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building does not present any adverse effects on the heritage contexts of the individually listed building or the surrounding Post Office Square Heritage Area. Nor will it affect the ability to interpret features of the heritage building or area or the relationships with other nearby heritage places. Mitigation has, in part, been achieved through the integration of the proposed billboard onto the existing signage frame on the roof of the building and its historic (meaning old) positioning and location, as well as an acknowledgment of the orientation of arterial roads relative to the subject site and billboard location.

Overall, the proposed digital billboard is considered to be appropriate and supportable.

Partly in response to the Council's position that the proposed sign:

... would likely result in heritage effects on the heritage and architectural values of the existing building and the heritage values of the Post Office Square heritage area

[emphasis added]

a peer review of the Archifact assessment report was commissioned by the Applicant.

The peer review was undertaken by Richard Knott, qualified in building conservation, urban design and planning. Mr Knott concluded that:

I have found that the Archifact's Assessment of Effects in Historic Heritage is based on a sound and well-accepted methodology and addresses all matters which I would expect it to consider.

Having visited the site, I accept and support Archifact's assessment against the relevant policies and assessment criteria of the Wellington City District Plan and consider that the proposal digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Customhouse Quay or Grey Street and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it will not have a more than minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

Refer **Appendix 6**.

Drawing on the Archifact assessment, key findings supporting the overall conclusion that effects on the historic heritage values of the Huddart Parker Building and the Post Office Square Heritage Area would be acceptable included:

- the proposal represents a reinstatement of an historic condition recognised in itself as having heritage value;
- the proposed sign will attach to the long-standing, existing roof-top frame. There will be no new roof penetrations;
- the proposed reinstatement of a sign fixed to the existing frame above the building will not detract from the architecture of the building being clearly separate from it and legibly unrelated to the building's Chicago-style architectural detailing;
- the proposed sign does not represent additional signage, but rather the reinstatement of long-standing signage - the reinstatement of an historic condition;
- the relatively compressed nature of the Post Office Square Heritage Area in addition to the high rooftop location of the proposed sign significantly mitigates perceived immediate effects for the sign on both the Huddart Parker Building and the Heritage Area;
- the reinstatement of the proposed billboard on the existing metal frame on the rooftop of the Huddart Parker Building is consistent with the long-standing visual urban condition and contextual element; and
- in the dominant views (from the north along Customhouse Quay), the sign is located within the elevation of taller buildings to the further south, a number of which have high-level signs. These buildings will be a backdrop to the proposed reinstated sign.

Conclusion - Heritage Effects

For the above reasons, it is concluded that the reinstatement of the sign on the roof of the Huddart Parker Building will not result in adverse effects on the historic heritage values of the building, or the Post Office Square Heritage Area, that are more than minor.

4.3 VISUAL AMENITY/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

The Council's senior urban design adviser (RMA) provided feedback on the draft proposal following the pre-application meeting held on 16 June 2019.

The feedback was that the proposed sign was inconsistent with the Design Guide for Signs in several key areas:

- it was not integrated with the architecture of the building;
- it does not achieve a relationship with the building below in terms of scale, placement of façade elements;
- it detracts from the visual qualities of the host building; and
- the sign would be visually intrusive.

Notwithstanding the preliminary assessment that:

... the proposed sign would likely result in adverse effects on townscape, resulting in a built form that is inconsistent with other signage around the city.

[emphasis added]

It was nevertheless recorded that:

It is noted that the framing of the former sign is still mounted on top of the building. Council may consider support for a static sign with cut-out letters and a similar surface area to the former Caltex and/or MoreFM sign mounted on the existing framework. The sign must still show sky behind and be limited to the building name, the name/logo of the business, owner or occupier of the building on which the sign is located, and or the product or service available on-site, similar to other signs on buildings nearby. A small electronic sign that displays information such as temperature or weather may also be considered.

A series of photomontages are attached - refer **Appendix 4**.

The 'backdrop' for the assessment that follows is the Council's earlier acceptance that the previous signs were considered to have townscape and historic heritage values.

Townscape: Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?

The building is situated on a prominent corner site at a corner of Post Office Square and Jervois Quay and has a strong street presence particularly when viewed from the north. Its rooftop has long been occupied by signage, historically by an illuminated clock and weather forecast, presently by an advertisement for a local radio station and a temperature display. This signage takes advantage of the prominence of the building, particularly for passing traffic along the key transport route of Customhouse and Jervois Quays.

Figure 3: Huddart Park Building - Wellington Heritage Inventory - Statement re "Townscape"

As part of the townscape assessment consideration has firstly been given to any effects on identified viewshafts.

4.3.1 Viewshafts

As noted in Section 3.1, the Huddart Parker Building lies immediately adjacent to Viewshaft 9 and within the frame of Viewshaft 15.

Viewshaft 9

The origin point for Viewshaft 9 is from an elevated position off The Terrace.



Figure 4: Viewshaft 9

The focal elements of the view are the former Wellington Harbour Board Offices (now the City to Sea Museum), the Inner Harbour and Oriental Bay.

The Huddart Parker Building does not intrude into the viewshaft, but rather is aligned with the right margin, which is identified as the “northern corner of the Huddart Parker Building”.⁷ Consequently, the proposed sign will not intrude into Viewshaft 9.

Viewshaft 15

Viewshaft 15 is an elevated view from the viewing platform to the north of the upper Cable Car station. The focal elements are Point Jerningham and Point Halswell.



Figure 5: Viewshaft 15

Although the viewshaft crosses over the site of the Huddart Parker Building, the base of the viewshaft is significantly above all of the buildings in the viewshaft traverse.

Also, the Huddart Parker Building and the proposed sign will not be visible from this viewpoint.

In summary, and although the sign will be seen from the viewpoint location for Viewshaft 9, it will not intrude into the viewshaft. Consequently, there will be no adverse effects on either viewshaft.

⁷ Wellington City District Plan, Chapter 13, Central Area, Appendix 11, Viewshaft Vs 9 (above Grey Street)

4.3.2 Design Guide for Signs

The Design Guide for Signs includes objectives and guidelines for two “specific signage issues”

- signs and heritage; and
- Illuminated /animated signs.

4.3.2.1 Signs and Heritage

In addition to general objectives and guidelines that are relevant in the context of a particular application, the following are specific to ‘signs and heritage’:

Objective 08 To ensure that new signs do not detract from the heritage context and significance of listed heritage items.

Guideline G8.1 Signs on or adjacent to identified heritage buildings, or with heritage areas, should be:

- *consistent with the scale, form materials, colours and design with the architectural form of the building to which they are attached, and sympathetic to its context;*
- *appropriately located on the building or site, and of a compatible type and style;*
- *of a high standard in terms of materials, graphics, construction and detail;*
- *an aid to identifying and understanding the heritage item, if located on the front/main building elevation;*
- *attached to the building with minimal intrusion into the building fabric, and in a way that allows easy removal without damage to any significant fabric; and*
- *designed and installed in sympathy with existing signs. Existing signs with a heritage value should be retained where possible, preferably in their original location.*

Comment

The Archifact assessment concluded that:

- *The heritage environment has already experienced modified and changed contexts which have not adversely affected the values of the Huddart Parker Building or the immediate Post Office Square Heritage Area.*
- *The reinstatement of the proposed billboard on the existing metal signage framework on the rooftop of the Huddart Parker Building is consistent with a long-standing visual urban condition and contextual element.*

In addition the following points are also noted:

- the proposed sign will attach to the long-standing, existing roof-top frame. There will be no new roof penetrations; and
- the sign will be of a high standard in terms of materials, graphics etc and will include relevant public information, including weather conditions and time, thus reinstating the historic nature and community acceptance and value of the sign.

4.3.2.2 Illuminated/Animated Signs

Objective 09 is specific to illuminated/animated signs:

Objective 09 To ensure that illuminated and animated signs are appropriate for their context and do not compromise the amenity of nearby Residential Areas, prominent public spaces or areas of special character of heritage value.

Comment

There are no nearby Residential Areas. The question remains: will the proposed sign compromise the amenity of the waterfront’s Queen’s Wharf (a prominent public space) or the Post Office Square Heritage Area?

In relation to Queen's Wharf, the sign will only be viewed from an oblique angle. It will not be visually obtrusive from this viewpoint and therefore not compromise the amenity of Queens Wharf.

In relation to the Post Office Square Heritage Area, as noted in the Archifact heritage assessment:

The relatively compressed nature of the Post Office Square Heritage Area, in addition to the high rooftop location of the proposed sign, significantly mitigates perceived immediate effects arising from the sign on both the Huddart Parker Building and the Heritage Area.

For these reasons, any compromise to the amenity of Post Office Square Heritage Area will not be significant, any more so than when the previous sign was in the exact same position.

4.3.2.3 General Objectives and Guidelines

In addition to Objectives 08 and 09, the following 'general' objectives and related guidelines are also relevant to an assessment of the proposed sign:

Scale and Location of Signs

Objective 0.1 To ensure that new signs are well integrated with the building or site to which they are attached, and are compatible with the scale design and visual character of that building or site.

Relationship to Surrounding Context

Objective 0.2 To ensure that new signs fit with the character of the surrounding area and acknowledge the wider city context.

Visual Obtrusiveness

Objective 0.3 To protect the significant characteristic of buildings, streetscapes, vistas and the city skyline from obtrusive signage.

Visual Clutter

Objective 04 To manage the number, design and location of new signs in a way that supports the aesthetic coherence of buildings and streetscapes and avoid visual clutter.

Signs and Road Safety

Objective 05 To ensure that new signs do not have a detrimental effect on traffic or pedestrian safety.

Design Quality

Objective 06 To encourage visually interesting signs that provide a legible and clear message through the use of high-quality materials and graphic design.

Maintenance

Objective 07 To ensure that signs are maintained to a high standard.

Comment

1. Scale and Location: the proposed sign is to be reinstated in the same location using the existing framework and to the same size as the previous sign, thus reinstating an historic condition.
2. Relationship to Surrounding Context: being in the same position of the long-standing (previous) sign, the relationship of the proposed reinstated sign will have the same relationship to the surrounding area as previously was the case.
3. Visual Obtrusiveness: given the height and location of the reinstated sign, it will not result in visual obtrusiveness in terms of the building itself, the streetscape, or any wider vista, including on any protected viewshaft.

4. Visual Clutter: the proposed sign is the only external sign on the Huddart Parker Building, reinstating an historic situation. It will not result in visual clutter.
5. Road Safety: the proposed sign will not result in any detrimental effects on traffic safety - refer Section 4.4 below.
6. Design Quality: consistent with other digital signs erected throughout the Central Area, the sign will use high quality materials and graphics and, by incorporating public information alongside commercial advertising, will provide a good level of 'visual interest'.
7. Maintenance: the provider/operator of the sign will ensure that the sign is maintained to a high standard.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed sign is compatible with the outcomes sought for Central Area signs. A rooftop sign on the Huddart Parker Building utilising the existing sign framework will reinstate a situation that previously existed for some 50 years, but with a sign using modern, widely accepted technology, materials and graphics.

4.4 TRAFFIC EFFECTS

The road safety effects of the proposal have been assessed by road safety experts, Stantec. Their report is attached - refer **Appendix 7**.

Section 5 of the report "Summary and Conclusions" records as follows:

This proposal relates to the establishment of a single-sided digital billboard on top of the Huddart Parkier Building at 2 Jervois Quay. Research confirms that billboard, including those with variable image digital displays, are unlikely to create driver distractions to the extent necessary to generate road safety problems. Indeed, there has been no study in New Zealand or elsewhere that has been able to identify either an empirical or statistical relationship between the presence of digital billboards of the type proposed in this application, and a consequential degradation in road safety.

In this regard there is a wide evidentiary gap between the perception that digital billboards have an adverse impact on road safety, compared with that which can be experienced, observed and monitored in the actual operation of digital billboards in New Zealand and internationally.

This assessment has found that subject to the recommendations below, the establishment of the billboard will not generate additional distractive effects to motorists to the extent that such effects would result in any identifiable deterioration to the safety, function, or performance of the local traffic environment.

The operational features that are recommended as conditions of consent to ensure appropriate and acceptable level of traffic operations and road safety are as follows:

- *Images shall have a minimum dwell time of 8 seconds.*
- *Images shall transition from one to the next via a 0.5 second dissolve.*
- *Image content shall be static, and not incorporate flashes, movement, animation or other dynamic effects.*
- *Images shall not use graphics, colours, or shapes in combination in such a way that they would resemble or cause confusion with an adjacent traffic control device.*
- *Images shall not invite or direct the driver to take some sort of driving action.*
- *Images shall not be linked to "tell a storey" across two or more sequential images (i.e. where the meaning of an image is dependent upon or encourages viewing of the immediately following image).*
- *Text size for the primary message within an image to be at least 150mm high.*
- *Lumination of images shall be automatically managed to respond to ambient lighting conditions, but at all times shall be within the maximum levels as prescribed by the District Plan.*

Based on the assessments as described in this report, and subject to the recommendations provided above, it is concluded that this proposal to establish a variable image digital billboard can be accepted as being consistent with the intentions of both the District Plan and TCDM3; and will enable it to function with a less

than minor adverse effects to traffic safety or operations. It is considered therefore, that there is no traffic engineering or road safety reason to preclude acceptance of this proposal.

Note: consent conditions to align with the above recommendations are recommended.

4.5 CONSENTS REQUIRED

At Section 3.2 above “Compliance Assessment” it was confirmed that consent was required for a Discretionary Activity (Restricted) under the Central Area and Heritage rules, as follows:

Central Area Rule

Rule 13.3.9, with the matters for assessment restricted to:

13.3.9.1 moving images, text or lights

13.3.9.2 position

13.3.9.3 dimensions

13.3.9.4 number of signs

13.3.9.5 sign display (of signs located on buildings above 18.6m above ground level).

It is confirmed that the proposed sign does not comply with the following standards:

13.6.4.1.2: any sign affixed to a building must not project above the parapet level, or the highest part of the building.

Comment: the reinstated sign is to be fixed to the existing framework which is attached to the roof of the building.

13.6.4.1.4: the maximum area of a sign located on a building above 18.6m is 15m².

Comment: the proposed sign is 54m² (13m x 4).

13.6.4.1.7: for any sign located in ... the Post Office Square Heritage Area ... the information to be displayed is limited to the building name, the name/logo of the business, owner or occupier of the building and/or the product or service available on the site.

Comment: in addition to public information (weather and time related information and community events) and the service/product of the building owner (the New Zealand Fruitgrowers’ Charitable Trust), the sign will display some third-party commercial advertising.

Given the non-compliance with the above three standards, as noted above, consent is required under Rule 13.3.9 in relation to the following matters:

13.3.9.1 moving images, text or lights

Comment: as noted in the Stantec report, the proposed sign will not flash or contain moving images or contain moving text or have moving lights. While each digital image on the billboard screen will be replaced every eight seconds, the fact is that each image will be static while being displayed.

13.3.9.2 position

Comment: the proposed reinstated sign is on the roof of the Huddart Parker Building, which has, in the past, been noted as having public/community interest.

13.3.9.3 dimensions

The sign’s dimensions (13m x 4m) are aligned with the existing framework and of the same dimensions of previous signs attached to the framework.

13.3.9.4 number of signs

The proposed sign is the only sign proposed. As there are no other existing signs attached to the building (nor are any further signs proposed) the sign will not result in visual clutter. The Applicant would accept a consent condition prohibiting any further ‘third-party’ or electronic signs being attached to the external fabric of the building.

13.3.9.5 sign display (of signs located on buildings above 18.6m above ground level).

The sign display, which will include community/public information, will not detract from the visual amenity of the building or the heritage area. The conclusion of the heritage assessment is that:

The proposed reinstatement of a billboard (in this case a digital billboard) to the existing signage frame atop the roof of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building does not present any adverse effects on the heritage contexts of the individually listed building or the surrounding Post Office Square Heritage Area. Nor will it affect the ability to interpret features of the heritage building or area or the relationships with other nearby heritage places. Mitigation has, in part, been achieved through the integration of the proposed billboard onto the existing signage frame on the roof of the building and its historic (meaning old) positioning and location, as well as an acknowledgment of the orientation of arterial roads relative to the subject site and billboard location.

Overall, the proposed digital billboard is considered to be appropriate and supportable.

For the reasons outlined above, it is the Applicant's opinion that reinstating the sign that existed for close of 50 years (1963 to 2012) is appropriate in relation to both the building and its location within the Post Office Square Heritage Area.

The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was also once a familiar inner-city landmark. The display was said to be the first "weather forecast in lights" for New Zealand and was operated from the meteorological office. The display used a pattern of 1.5m high lights to create the words "fine", "cloudy", "rain", "change" or "gale" and the latter was chosen in "recognition of Wellington's peculiar needs."¹⁸ The display, which was designed to be read from the Wellington Railway Station, also showed the time in hours, minutes and seconds. It was noted that although Auckland had a sign that displayed the time, Christchurch one that displayed the weather forecast and Dunedin one that displayed the temperature and the time, Wellington's was the only one that was linked to an official source such as the Met Office.

Figure 6: Huddart Park Building - Wellington Heritage Inventory - Statement re "History"

Heritage Rule

Rule 21D.3.1, with the matters for assessment restricted to:

21D.3.1.1 sign design, location and placement

21D.3.1.2 area, height and number of signs

21D.3.1.3 illumination

21D.3.1.4 fixing and methods of fixing

Under Rule 21D.3.1, the criteria to guide the Council's assessment are listed as follows:

21D.3.1.5 the extent to which any sign supporting structures detracts from the heritage significance or values of a heritage building or object.

21D.3.1.6 whether any sign detracts from the architecture of the building including decorative detailing, structural divisions, windows or doorways.

21D.3.1.7 whether additional signs will result in clutter.

21D.3.1.8 the extent to which the quality of the design of the sign and the standard of graphics complement the building or object.

21D.3.1.9 whether the means of fixing the sign to a listed heritage building or object including associated cabling or wiring for illuminated signs will adversely affect the heritage fabric and heritage values of the listed building or object.

21D3.1.10 whether intensity of illumination will adversely affect the heritage values of the building or object

21D.3.1.11 the extent to which signs comply with the Design Guide for signs.

Note: the Archifact report assesses the proposed sign against each of the above assessment criteria - refer Section 8.1 at pages 19-21.

The detail is not repeated here. However, the assessment provided by Archifact is adopted to support the conclusion that in relation to the matters over which discretion is restricted, any effects will not be more than minor.

4.6 POLICY ASSESSMENT

Given the nature and context of the proposal, the following policies are considered relevant:

1. Central Area

Policy 12.2.10.1 Guide the design of signs (and their associated structures and affixtures) to enhance the quality of signage within the Central Area.

Policy 12.2.10.2 Manage the scale, intensity and placement of signs to:

- *maintain and enhance the visual amenity of the host building or site; and*
- *ensure public safety.*

Policy 12.2.10.3 Ensure signs in the Central Area do not adversely affect the architectural integrity of the building on which the sign is located.

Policy 12.2.10.4 Ensure that signs contribute positively to the visual amenity of the building and neighbourhood and cityscape above the fourth storey level.

Policy 12.2.10.5 Control the number and size of signs within heritage areas and areas of special character.

Policy 12.2.10.7 Ensure that signs in the Central Area do not adversely affect the amenity values of nearby Residential Areas.

2. Heritage

Policy 20.2.1.9 Ensure that signs or listed heritage buildings or objects (or sites on which they are located) or within Heritage Areas do not adversely affect heritage values and qualities and avoid unnecessary or inappropriate signage.

In explanation of Policy 20.2.1.9, it is stated that:

The placement of signs can adversely affect the heritage values. Considering signs as a Discretionary (Restricted) activity will enable the number, size, placement and means of fixing to be evaluated and assessed.

Assessing the proposal against the above policies, the following overall conclusions are reached:

- the sign will be attached to an existing frame and will incorporate high quality graphics [Policy 12.2.10.1];
- the sign will be the only external sign attached to the building and will not detract from the visual amenity of the building or result in any public safety issues [Policy 12.2.10.2];
- the roof level sign will not unacceptably affect the architectural integrity of the building [Policy 12.2.10.3], or heritage value of the building and area [Policy 12.2.10.5] as evidenced by the long-standing installation of a sign in the same position and of the same size for some 50 years. Also, and notwithstanding its size, the sign will not appear as a dominant feature in views, including in views from the north where it will be viewed against a backdrop of the existing taller buildings to the south and southwest of the site;
- the reinstatement of the sign will not make a significant change to the historic build environment condition, streetscape characteristics or the skyline within the area, being located within the elevation of an existing building [Policy 12.2.10.4];
- the sign will not adversely affect the amenity values of any nearby Residential Area [Policy 12.2.10.7]; and
- as detailed in the Heritage Assessment and the Heritage Peer Review, the sign will not adversely affect the heritage values of either the building or the heritage area [Policy 20.2.1.9].

Overall therefore, it is considered that the reinstatement of the sign as proposed is not contrary to the relevant policies relating to Central Area signs and signs on heritage buildings located with a heritage area.

4.7 PART 2 RMA ASSESSMENT

Part 2 of the Act “Purpose and Principles” comprises sections 5 to 8.

Section 5 sets out the Act’s purpose as follows:

- (1) *The overall purpose of the Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.*
- (2) *In this Act, **sustainable management** means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while -*
 - (a) *sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*
 - (b) *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
 - (c) *avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

In turn, sections 6 to 8 set out ‘principles’ relating to:

- Matters of National Importance (s6)
- Other Matters (s7)
- Treaty of Waitangi (s8)

The recent Court of Appeal decision in *R J Davidson Family Trust v Marlborough District Council*⁸ confirms that decision-makers considering an application under s104(1) can have recourse to Part 2, although the extent to which Part 2 has a bearing on the outcome of a resource consent application will depend on the applicable planning instruments.

In the Applicant’s opinion, although it is not necessary to have recourse to Part 2, in the event that Council’s reporting officer considers that a Part 2 assessment is warranted, the following assessment is provided:

- the site and building is not identified by the District Plan as being of special importance to Maori [s8];
- granting consent will enable the Trust to receive income that in turn can be directed toward the long-term maintenance of the building thus enhancing historic amenity values and the quality of the built environment as sought by [s7(c) and s7(f)]; and
- the reinstatement of the sign is not contrary to any of the matters of national importance under s6, including specifically that the reinstatement of a sign in this instance is not “*inappropriate*” given the recognition that the previous sign, which was in situ for close of 50 years, was a “*familiar city landmark*”.

Thus, granting consent will be consistent with and will promote sustainable management [s5] by enabling the Trust to positively contribute to the maintenance of the heritage building.

Therefore, in the opinion of the Applicant, there are significant positive Part 2 matters that support resource consent being granted to the application.

4.8 CONSENT CONDITIONS

In addition to consent conditions relating to the operation of the proposed sign, as recommended in the Stantec Report, the Applicant is also receptive to a consent condition requiring the establishment of a “deferred maintenance reserve fund” in the Trust’s financial statements into which sign rental payments would be directed. In turn, the reserve fund would be drawn on to pay for the maintenance and enhancement of the building’s heritage fabric.

It is also recommended that consent conditions confirm:

1. the maximum size of the sign at 13m x 4m;
2. the existing framework is ‘fit for purpose’ (confirmed by an engineer’s certificate); and

⁸ *RJ Davidson Family Trust v Marlborough District Council* [2018] NZCA 316. Also refer *Planning Quarterly* Issue 210, September 2018, and the article “Part 2 is Back” at pps 37-40.

3. no additional external 'third-party' or electronic signs shall be attached to the building.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The Applicant, the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust has applied for resource consent to reinstate a roof top sign.

A previous static billboard sign was removed during the seismic upgrade and refurbishment during 2021-2014. The steel framework was retained in situ with the intention of reinstating a sign of similar size.

Previous signs had included weather and time information.

With the more recent development of digital signs, and consistent with other recently installed digital signs in the Central Area, the proposal is for digital billboard.

The sign will reinstate the public information (time and weather component of previous signs), along with information relating to community events and the promotion of the Trust's 'marketing campaigns' - for example the Trust's "5 + a Day" campaign - as well as third-party advertising.

The sign will present high quality graphics.

As the Huddart Parker Building is a listed heritage building and located within the Post Office Square Heritage Area, the principal focus of the assessment that is recorded in this assessment of environmental effects (AEE) report is on what effect the proposed reinstatement of a rooftop sign might have on historic heritage values.

To this end, an independent heritage assessment was commissioned which in turn was subject to an independent peer review.

The heritage assessment concluded, inter alia, that:

The proposed reinstatement of a billboard (in this case a digital billboard) to the existing signage frame atop the roof of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building does not present any adverse effects on the heritage contexts of the individually listed building or the surrounding Post Office Square Heritage Area. Nor will it affect the ability to interpret features of the heritage building or area or the relationships with other nearby heritage sites.

In turn, the peer review concluded:

... the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Customhouse Quay or Grey Street and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context ... it will have no more than a minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

Drawing on those conclusions, it is the Applicant's opinion that resource consent should be granted for the reinstatement of the rooftop sign, subject to the consent conditions noted in Section 4.8 above.



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22 April 2022

APPENDICES

1. Owner's Statement
2. Engineer's Statement
3. Elevation Drawing - Showing the Existing Framework
4. Photomontages
5. Heritage Assessment
6. Heritage Peer Review
7. Traffic Engineering Report